"The Price of Silence"

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ΔΛΩ

1989

"The Price of Silence"

Anthony C. Daniel

"Outline"

I Childhood
Discovery

(a. discovery
b. damnation
c. denial
→ acceptance

III First Brush with the Virus

The Virus Surfaces
A. Metamorphosis
B. My Ship Sails In (Falling in Love)
C. Lady Sings The Blues

Sex & Drugs

II A. Sowing the Seeds the Youth & adult
b. Invincible
C. Caution to the Wind & danger attitude

IV Starting Over

new people/Place ← A. Finding my niche / House of mirrors
B. The Phoenix Rises - (the radical is neutralized)
C. Finding a home / The House

V The Virus Resurfaces
A. Little Plagues

Silence

"Well it seems after sending your blood back through the line and doing a different test, we've got your test results and you've tested + for the HIV Virus." "OK". Now this means several things. "Do you have a count of my T-cells", "Yes, your T cell count is @ 184".

"Not all of us live in a vacuum.
Some of us are quite aware of the world
in which we live." James Sipher

February 8, 1994

I guess we always start with what's most important to us "Family". My whole family knows and sometimes they forget "That's my Day". Of course I always remind them. They've always known, they haven't always accepted and I do believe even today it's more comfortable for them if we don't talk about it. Sometimes I make things difficult for both of us. Sometimes I put uncomfortable situations in make us grow, for having dealt with them head on.

I pulled everyone in on my life differently. I didn't do the usual "well you know "I'm Gay", kinda thing. Everyone knew me so there wasn't a need to make that type of statement. I went on the assumption that everyone knew, but typically Black families just choose to ignore it hopes it would go away or we'd give in to societal

pressure and take up with his. I guess either way you look at it, simply not dealing with him the route they wished to take. I remember only mother being the first to break the silence. It happened one day both my sister next to me "Jootie", arrived home mid afternoon. Both of us having been out with our prospect for marriage neither of which was about shit. My mother, having concern and his pure disgust at what she knew was a waste. "You all can't pick no men." "It the middle of the afternoon you know you need to be at work." I wouldn't be with no man that didn't have no job and want to keep me off of mine." Since we'd never gone into conversation, dialogue or anything else remotely romantically linking me to another man. This really knocked my nerves. I scrambled to pick up the pieces of my shattered face. "Girl, did she hear what she said?" "Child yes, and she's packing it today." "Yes man, she is". Girl I'm about to get out of here

in a hurry.. She's not going to come
bear me again, my nerves can't
take it.

That scenario left me with
mixed emotions. How dare she assume
anything about me at all. We've never talked
about my reliability before. Then on
the flip side of the coin was me wanting
to take this opportunity for conversation.
How do you know her no good, how
long have you known her no good, do
you accept that? The questions were ready
to be sprung forth, demanding replies.

I was such an animated child from the very start. I here & was @ 4 yrs old siting @ my sisters dinnette set with my best girlfriend/arch enemy having tea for two. Just one of the many scenarios one could conjure up by playing Mommy & Daddy (HOUSE). The roles were often reversed, with her being the daddy and me the mommy. It only seemed fair, one of us should not get to be the glamorous one all the time. I would put so much more of myself into my part as mother than daddy. When we could we would even add costumes to add charades. The height of theatre season for but a young girl.

Oh Yes, even @ 4 yrs old I knew something was quite different about me. I had not come up with a name for it yet, but I knew. I had a love/hate relationship with my girlfriend, but I truly longed for the company of @ least 4 or 5 more little boys in the neighborhood. They were the source of daydreams and fantasies.

Autobiographie

[redacted]

4/24/94

"Put them damn dolls down, now here's these are the toys Mama bought for her big boy. But Mama, I like Dancing dolly (a ballerina doll complete with tiara which you turn then hold while she pirouets on one foot), I'll play with the trucks later. Boy gimme that damn doll and quit acting a sissy. You want to be a sissy, you want to be a punk! You want folks laughing @ you and calling you names all your life. Mama ain't raising you to be no sissy. Mama raising you to be a man, so you better start acting like one.

↑ change this to confrontation with sister about the doll

On the playground with the girls on the swings while the boys play football in the background

"Mama, What's a sissy. Boy why you asking such all these crazy questions. Sister said cause I like to play with dolly, Mrs. Walker said because I like to play with girls I must be a sissy. But what is a sissy?

Confrontation with Mrs. Walker
Conversation overheard as a child → to cute to be a boy
Compliments and observations from others → ass like a woman
looks just like his sister

Aug 11 1994

The silence is fucking with me, with me! (only one of the biggest mouth bitches on the East Coasts.) Imagine how I feel @ this point in my life, I'm growing more conservative as I mature. Or perhaps I'm realizing that there's a time & place for everything. Either way it's all rather trivial right now. The most important thing right now is that I not let it (the silence) consume me. It is my worst enemy. More of an obstacle than any man or woman could ever be. More than any OI, or virus will ever be.

The silence visits me most often when I'm in the presence of my Family. This is where it causes me the most pain. Pain, anger and frustration. I get angry because of my fear of rejection, or any negative response from my family (especially my Mom & Dad). They ask a question and the silence mutates the truth, or @ least dilutes it enough for them to swallow. It's so difficult for me @ this point to overcome this "Silence." The price I'll pay for remaining silent is much more than I think I want to pay. No matter how I rationalize it in my head, the truth is hard to ignore.

Aug 11 94

It seems as though my relationship with my family exist on the basis of this very enemy. It is as if things not spoken (Silence), do not exist therefore can do no harm. And I am the only person in the family who constantly makes an attempt @ striking the silence down. And still she rises (SILENCE), daring me to stand tall, daring me to speak up, daring me to arm myself with truth.

As the days and wks go by and reality has me arming myself with truth, just to get by from day to day. All I can do is deal with whats happening and have faith in my creator, knowing that he will not send me any load to heavy to carry.

Realizing and calling the enemies name has been a strengthening act in itself. What I need and expect from those who say they Love me is strength, not sympathy. I can get through this with you holding my hand, and leaning on you when I'm weak. I can carry my load up the hill, but I can push you if you're part of that load.

"With You I'm Born Again" Billy Preston Syreeta

"Black is the color of my True Love Hair" Nina Simone ⇒ If I should lose you

4/14/94

"Taboo"

If you don't talk about it, it'll go away

There's an elephant in the living room
but nobody talks about it.

"The price of Silence"

May 29, 91

I long. I had a dream of writing a book, and now I see the dream can be realized. With films like Tongues Untied and Looking for Langston as inspiration. With writers like Essex Hemphill and Marlon Riggs, James Baldwin, Langston Hues and so many others how could I not want to. The familiarness in the writings of such great black women as Maya Angelou, Terri Mac Millan, Gloria Naylor, Alice Walker and many other have caused I not put into ~~words~~ words mine and other black gay men voices. And I will not stop with the book I want to collaborate with someone for the making of a movie.

aug RT 93

Silence = death

Conversation being my forte
Writing being my passion
Silence will always be the enemy

I long had a dream of writing a book, and now I see the dream can be realized. With films like "Tongues Untied" and "Looking for Langston" as inspiration. With writers like Essex Hemphill, Audre Lorde, Marlon Riggs, Remdall Jenan, and so many others; How could I not want to make my own contribution. The parallels I find in the writings of our African American giants like Maya Angilou, Terri McMillan, Gloria Naylor, Alice Walker. And I will not stop with a novel, I want to direct some of my works and eventual produce, direct and star in a feature length film.

@ least tried to be as obscure and inobtrusive as possible. Mainly for fear of offending or sparking responses from our retrospect counterparts. Well I'm sorry we've remained in the shadows far too long. I've had enough of stifling my spirit for the comfort of my heterosexual family members, friends, co workers acquaintances and strangers. Deal with this, I'm Black, I'm gay, I'm male and I'm HIV+. Be uncomfortable for me, I can't keep making things easy for you, share some of this burden with me.

There are a multitude of Black gay men who's significant others are white, asian, or Eurocentric, there is plenty of material from white gays, there are artist work from everyone except the afrocentric Black gay male who love other Black gay men. Even the bisexuals have had more works directed on their issues than we have ours.

Silence

4/14/94

So why aren't our Mothers and Fathers asking more questions. Why aren't they raising more Hell! Is not the deaths of their children reason enough to question someone, something other than themselves. Instead they grieve for the loss of their sons and daughters. They grieve greatly, blaming themselves, blaming their Children. They grieve with the hopes of sorrow being enough to contain the pain. But what happens when its not enough. When the sorrow of the loss, the misdirected blame can no longer hold the pain? Where do you run? We dare not take it to God, for surely it is He that brought all this to bear. For the sins of our fathers, for the sins of we, for the sins of our children.

The story of a young mans journey to himself. From as early as 5 yrs old struggles with his feelings and what others say he should feel. Not only must he struggle to find who he is — Black, Gay and Male, but he must take his family and friends along on the journey.

Audre Lorde
James Baldwin
Joseph Beam
Essex Hemphill
Vega
Reggie Harris

REflections

Silence

ASSATA SAINT

4/19/94

This book is dedicated to the living. And to the legacy of some truly courageous people who were trailblazers in the Black and Gay communities. People who were not afraid to get to the TRUTH of themselves and made no apologies for being themselves.

Finially I feel it, that feeling that comes up through your bones that lets you know you can do whatever it is your heart so desires. I feel this novel taking shape, or form. The whole concept of putting parts of my personal experience "in the Life" into print is mind boggling. As the things that I write inspire someone to strive for the truth of themselves and not the price of Silence, that will make the writing of this novel all the sweeter. For me to live long enough to see that proof become fact would be the greatest victory in my life.

* a pictorial history of myself from 1st day interview until death. Including visits to the Clinic, the doctors office, grocery store, mall and work. Reaction to test results, people after I tell them I'm HIV+,

Silence

April 19, 94

I'm writing this in the event of my death before I finish the novel I'm working on "The Price of Silence". It's a piece of work that sums up what I think is one of the Black Communities largest problems, Silence. The reason being is that generally speaking that is the way we deal with subject matter that is uncomfortable for us. A whole multitude of problems could be solved in our communities if we dealt w/ "us" and our issues as matter of factly as possible. I feel like first this must start in the home, must be taken even further in the church, reiterated in the schools and manifested in our communities and hopefully the results will show in the streets.

My book is based ~~mostly~~ primarily on personal experience. I think that people that know me will definitely consider me somewhat of a radical. That is a personality trait of mine, something I came here with, much like my skin color and sexuality. Call them things I cannot change. There have been very few works that have dealt with as many issues as this work will. At least not works coming from a black gay man who loves other black gay men. For far too long, so many of us have hid, for